

The Duty of Loyalty.

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## A SERMON,

PREACHED IN SAINT PETER'S CHURCH, COBOURG,

ON SUNDAY, XXI. OCTOBER, M.DCCC.XLIX.

BY

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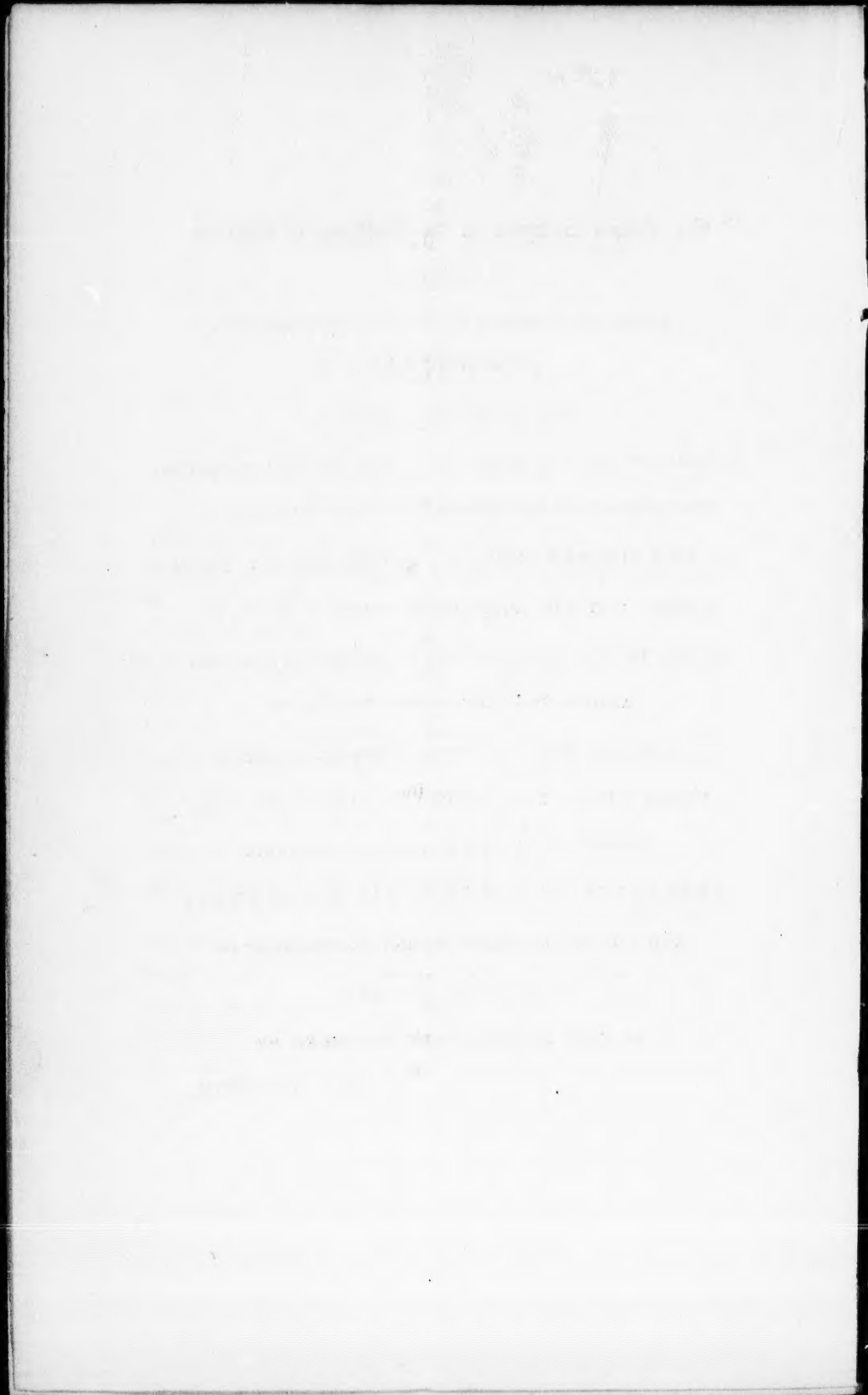
TO  
His Fellow Subjects in the Province of Canada,  
IN GENERAL,  
And to the Members of his own Congregation  
IN PARTICULAR;

THE FOLLOWING SERMON,  
PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE CHURCH-WARDENS  
AND SEVERAL OTHER MEMBERS OF THAT CONGREGATION,  
IN THE HUMBLE HOPE, AS EXPRESSED BY THEM,  
THAT "AT THE PRESENT MOMENTOUS CRISIS OF  
AFFAIRS IN THIS COLONY, IT MAY BE PRODUCTIVE OF GOOD,"

AND WITH EVERY PRAYER FOR THEIR  
TEMPORAL AND SPIRITUAL PROSPERITY, WHICH,  
UNDER DIVINE PROVIDENCE, HE FIRMLY BELIEVES,  
DEPENDS, IN A LARGE DEGREE, UPON THEIR  
ADHERENCE TO MONARCHICAL GOVERNMENT,  
AND THEIR CONNEXION WITH THE GREATEST OF  
CHRISTIAN EMPIRES;

IS MOST RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.



# The Duty of Loyalty.

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## A SERMON.

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PROVERBS, xxiv., 21.—“My son, fear thou the Lord and the King : and meddle not with them that are given to change.”

UPON the first point stated in the text, there probably will be no dispute or doubt. None will deny the duty of fearing the Lord : amongst Christians, at least, it will be felt and acknowledged that to the Creator and Governor of all things, a Being most holy and Omnipotent, all fear and adoration is due. Even the untaught savage, hearing his voice in the thunder, and witnessing his power in the whirlwind, falls prostrate, and adores the unseen divinity : surely, then, they to whom the “arm of the Lord hath been revealed” through a crucified and risen Saviour, will not withhold their fear and reverence, and praise and honour, from the might and majesty of Him who is King of kings, and Lord of lords.

The “fear of the Lord” is, indeed, one grand foundation of practical religion ; a sentiment which, if properly acted upon, would strike at the root of the many crimes and the much wickedness now common in the world. The consciousness that the eye of God is continually upon us,—

united with a knowledge of his hatred of sin, his abhorrence even of the appearance of evil,—would, assuredly, deter the bold or secret sinner from many acts of disobedience and transgression, if the feeling were allowed its due weight in the heart. We should see less of the wickedness which deforms the world, and disturbs the order of society, if people were actuated, as they should be, by the fear of God.

With this high principle there is associated, in the text, a standing and important duty,—one, indeed, which naturally springs from it,—one of the fruits of that spirit of obedience which our holy religion so prominently teaches; namely, the duty of “honouring the king,”—of yielding due reverence and obedience to the sovereign who is placed over us.

There is often an objection urged, as there is often a repugnance felt, to the discussion, from this sacred place, of the subject to which the latter part of the words of the text would naturally lead us; and in that repugnance, on some grounds, I confess myself strongly to share. Still I conceive that the duty comprehended in this admonition of the wise man, may sometimes very profitably be brought forward as the theme even of spiritual meditation,—provided that the prosecution of the subject is not made to encroach upon those hackneyed topics of political agitation which, in so many cases, unhappily disquiet and disturb the public mind, and warp and alloy the kindly flow of private charity.

And I feel constrained, my brethren,—in the desire and duty to adapt counsels and exhortations to times and

circumstances,—to adopt this theme just now, from observing, as with pain and grief we all must do, so undisguised a disposition to make light of the obligation of loyalty, and to regulate our duty to the sovereign by what personal and the most common-place interests may dictate. Many, in what we must term these sadly degenerate times, canvass the expediency or in expediency of the regal government under which we live, and the solemn obligation of their allegiance and their oath, not even according to the better freedom, or the higher political advantages, which, by its abrogation, they might enjoy ; but by the capricious and doubtful benefits to their property, their business, or their speculations which they may acquire by cutting off this ancient and hallowed connexion, and annexing themselves to another state and another form of government. The sacred bond of allegiance, and the awful solemnity of an oath, are things which appear to be put out of the question : it is thought, or appears to be thought, that these are obligations which can be dropped at will ; in other words, that the most solemn contract, confirmed by every holy and religious sanction, is only binding so long as it is agreeable to, or subserves, worldly interest, convenience, or caprice.

Let us hope, then, that much of this temper of the world,—that much of this utilitarian view of high and holy duty,—will be corrected by a reference to the *religious* obligation of obedience to “the powers that be ;” let us hope that this low and wretched estimate of the ancient and ennobling tie of loyalty will be abandoned, if people should be brought to reflect that the question of reverence for those that are in authority, respect for the laws, and

submission to the government, is not a mere question of expediency or self, but a duty which ranks high amongst Christian ordinances,—that it is something for the neglect or slight of which we shall one day give an account at the general judgement of the world. It were well if this lesson, taught in the days of childhood, were more faithfully pondered upon in maturer years,—“to honour and obey the Queen, and all that are put in authority under her; to submit ourselves to all our governors, teachers, spiritual pastors and masters; to order ourselves lowly and reverently to all our betters.”

This injunction, placed thus formally and distinctly in the rudiments of the young Christian's education, is by no means the dictate of mere human authority: all must be aware that it rests upon the most positive commands of Scripture. St. Paul, for example, in giving instructions to Timothy about his ministerial office, says, “I exhort, that, first of all, supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, be made for all men; *“for kings and all that are in authority.”* Here the Apostle clearly shews that not only are such prayers and intercessions a Christian duty in general, but that it is incumbent also upon the pastors and teachers of the Church of Christ to enjoin and recommend them. And the Apostle here is only reiterating a sentiment which was inculcated in the Church of God from the beginning.

When it pleased God to yield to the short-sighted request of his people, and to give them a king, it is well known how particular the prophet Samuel was in explaining the honour and obedience which would be due to his authority; and the conduct of David, during the last days of the

unhappy Saul, very pathetically represents the reverence and submission which was paid to the "Lord's anointed." Persecuted and hunted as he was by that unfortunate king, David scrupulously forebore to injure him, even when the means were in his power of ridding himself forever of that formidable and implacable enemy. Not only would he not lift a hand against him himself, but he restrained the vengeance of his followers in these words of a conscientious and religious man,—“The Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master, the Lord's, anointed, to stretch forth mine hand against him, seeing he is the anointed of the Lord.”\* And instead of rewarding the Amalekite who asserted that he had slain Saul, this was the language and the treatment he returned to him—“How wast thou not afraid to stretch forth thine hand against the Lord's anointed? And David called one of the young men and said, Go near and fall upon him; and he smote him that he died.”†

We find in Scripture that the expression, “Let the king live,”—one which may be rendered by the familiar words, “God save the king,”—was a usual form of salutation or prayer; and, “O king, live for ever,” was a customary address from holy men even to heathen kings. It was always understood that, in praying for kings or persons in authority, reference was chiefly had to the *office* which they filled, and to the source from whence it was derived; so that in praying for them, we might be considered as entreating the blessing of God upon the country which they govern, and of which ourselves form a part. That is a

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\* 1 Sam. xxiv., 6.

† 2 Sam. i. 14, 15.

sentiment embodied in this beautiful and patriotic prayer of the Psalmist,—“Pray for the peace of Jerusalem: they shall prosper that love thee. Peace be within thy walls and prosperity within thy palaces. For my brethren and companions’ sake, I will now say, Peace be within thee.”\*

These are *examples* of reverence and attachment to the rulers of their country manifested by the greatest and best of men: we have, besides, a multitude of *precepts* inculcating a similar obedience and respect. It was said by Moses to the Israelites, “Thou shalt not revile the gods, (that is, the judges,) nor curse the rulers of thy people;”† and this, too, is the admonition of the wisest of men,—“Curse not the king, no, not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bed-chamber, I counsel thee to keep the king’s commandment, and that in regard of the oath of God.”‡

In the New Testament, we have, in the first place the example and commands of our blessed Saviour, enjoining the same duty. Not only did he pay the tribute-money, as soon as demanded; but when questioned upon the associated duties, he distinctly said, “Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar’s, and unto God the things that are God’s.”||

St. Paul, too, furnishes us with an instance of the respect which is due to persons in authority, in his contention with the high-priest of the Jews. Having unguardedly addressed to him an unbecoming epithet, and being on that account rebuked by some of the by-standers, he immediately corrects himself with these words, “I wist not, brethren, that

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\* Ps. cxxii., 6, 7, 8. † Exod. xxii., 28. ‡ Eccles. viii., 2. || Matt. xxii., 21.

he was the high-priest ; for it is written, Thou shalt not speak evil of the ruler of thy people.”\*

That such were the genuine and hearty sentiments of St. Paul, is evident from these injunctions in his epistle to the Romans,—“Let every soul be subject to the higher powers ; for there is no power but of God : the powers that be are ordained of God. Whosoever resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God ; and they that resist, shall receive to themselves damnation. Render, therefore, to all their dues : tribute to whom tribute is due ; custom to whom custom ; fear to whom fear ; honour to whom honour.”†

To Titus the same Apostle gives the following command, —a charge which all the ministers of Christ should consider as equally addressed to themselves :—“put them in mind to be subject to principalities and powers, to obey magistrates, to be ready to every good work.”‡ And we have the same duty strongly enforced by the Apostle St. Peter,—“Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord’s sake : whether it be to the king as supreme ; or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.”|| In his second epistle, the same Apostle reckons amongst the “unjust, reserved unto the day of judgement to be punished, “those that despised governments and speak evil of dignities.”§

It is, my brethren, in conformity with such precepts and examples,—influenced by the custom of all ages,—and

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\* Acts xxiii., 5. † Rom. xiii. 1, 2, 7. ‡ Titus iii. 1. || 1 Peter ii., 13, 14. § 2 Peter ii. 10.

moved, especially, by the express declarations of the will and commands of God, that our Church has introduced into her admirable ritual, repeated prayers for those that are in authority. She adheres faithfully to the principle, that the duties of good subjects and of good Christians are essentially and inseparably connected; and that unfaithfulness to human laws and disaffection to earthly rulers, uniformly betokens a spirit which is opposed to the obligations and restraints of religion, and unwilling to pay the homage that is due to the majesty of God himself.

As this temper of irreligion spreads, the feeling becomes a more common one, that not only does it matter not under what form of civil government people may live,—and the same sentiment, we have too much experience, extends to religious government also,—but that this may be selected by themselves, and shaped and altered by themselves, to suit the fancies or interests of the passing day. There is no reference to rule or government as “the Lord’s ordinance,” such as the Scriptures reveal it; and in the Scriptures, we know, that is never referred to as the creation or invention of man. When God was pleased to permit a head, or visible controlling power to the Jewish people, after they had lived so long under his own immediate government, he ordained amongst them no democratical rule, but the regal authority: he gave them the kingly government, as bearing the most intelligible analogy to his own government of the universe, and as helping to lead men’s minds onwards continually to Himself the Sovereign of all things. And we can hardly doubt, that it was from some similar revelation at the first, that the same monarchical rule prevailed amongst all people and in all ages before.

It is a fact, too, as has been well remarked, worthy of being carefully considered and remembered, that when our Lord Jesus Christ wished to make men understand the nature of His dominion, he invariably drew his imagery, not from any *republican* dignity,—such as the Roman polity, in its tribunes and consuls, in some degree afforded,—but exclusively from the *kingly* office. Thus, the whole economy of grace is styled the *kingdom* of heaven. The happiness of the blessed in a future world, is represented by a marriage-supper which a *king* made for his son; and the ministers of the Gospel are designated as the servants of a *king* sent forth to invite men to the supper. The act of pardoning a sinner, is the *king* forgiving a servant who owes him a vast sum of money. The final sentence is pronounced by the *king* seated upon his throne of glory; and the reward bestowed upon his people,—however much that may be now despised,—is, that they, too, shall be *kings* and *priests*. No doubt there was a meaning in all this; and that our Lord selected that symbol from things human which most perfectly represented things divine.

It has also been well argued, that this condition of government, a *monarchy*, has a wholesome practical effect,—a moral and religious influence, on those who are the subjects of it; it serves to propagate in them a sentiment of humility, and stays the human mind from the extravagant wanderings and never-ceasing cravings of an unbridled ambition. A monarchy presents to every man one station to which he cannot attain. The mind, once convinced of this, goes on insensibly to generalize the conviction, and quietly to come to the same conclusion with respect to other stations, and thus is led to contentment with that state

of life in which God has placed us. In this way, every individual, from the peer to the peasant, becomes imbued with that feeling of restraint upon ambition : each communicates it again to those within his sphere ; and so, all learn to look up, without envy or emulation, in perfect tranquility, to a superior whose equal they never hope, and never aspire to be. This habit of mind, formed with respect to the Sovereign, operates with respect to all the intervening steps, in some degree also. Men, in this way, are trained to regard superiors, not quite so far removed, with different feelings ; and thus there is fostered a sentiment of reverence and submission, which, though not amounting to direct Christian humility or the fear of God, is a much better preparation for the sanctifying operations of the Gospel than the unchecked exercise of natural pride and envy.\*

Surely then, my brethren, we should be thankful for all this. We should thank God, that He has been pleased to ordain it as our lot to live under that form of government which is nearest allied to the examples and ordinances furnished in his own blessed Scriptures. We shall feel thankful for this, as having the strongest and most natural influence in restraining "the madness of the people," and preserving to us the inestimable blessings of law, order, quiet, and true religion. In respect to these high and peculiar benefits,—from the force of duty especially, and the constraint of the most solemn obligations, we shall gladly

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\* For the substance of the two preceding paragraphs, I am indebted to an able paper which appeared in the *Church of England Magazine* some years ago. I have used the passage from some extracts transcribed at the time, and regret that I cannot just now state the volume and page.

obey this advice of the wise man, "My son, fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change."

Alas! that this proneness to change should drive men to the sin of severing the dearest ties, breaking the most solemn bonds, and overturning the most sacred religious obligations. Once loyalty was a word of price,—the name of country a talisman. And can the charm of the one, and the dearness of the other, be so recklessly flung away?—Can the land of our birth, the land of our forefathers' graves and perchance of our kindred's hopes, be thus torn from the heart and blotted from the memory, through a sordid and often baseless calculation of the interests of a day or of a generation? What, in parting with our loyal and national associations, shall we give up the one fresh spot of greenness and beauty amidst the wilderness of sordid speculations and cold calculating interests around us,—the one gem of brightness amidst the cloud and gloom, the canker and rust of earthliness that rests upon the prospect elsewhere?—Come it then to pass that a wayward generation should trample on the sacred name of Queen and country,—treat as worthless the monarch's crown, and the nation's altars; then it needs no prophetic spirit to say, their glory is departed and their joy is gone. No more will they sing the songs of Zion with a cheerful spirit, but it will be a melancholy strain in a strange land; their harps unstrung, or swept in mournful cadence beside the lonely waters: their once "merry" land a dream of memory which wakes no joy, nor hope, but provokes the start of agony and the shudder of despair.

The "dinner of herbs" in quiet and peace, in the fear of God, in adherence to principle, in maintenance of every old

and holy association,—loyal duty and love of country,—better this than the “stalled ox,” with all the aggravations of burning excitement, party animosity, the wreck of morality, the overthrow of genuine Christianity. Better a little with a conscience at peace, than thousands with the agitations and conflicts and sins which the desertion of principle and the abandonment of duty will inevitably bring on.

No: we shall not be of those who would rate their loyalty by a standard of gain, and shift their allegiance with the alternations of commerce; we shall not allow a high and sacred religious duty to be smothered by a temporary vexation or a passing disappointment. Truth and duty will be found interwoven with the heart strings; and the “issues of life” must be broken up, before we can part with our loyal fealty and our unalterable vows.

We have but one word for the reckless and godless cry of the day,—it is treason, daring treason; and we shall face it with the blunt and honest opposition which so audacious a wickedness deserves. We care not for the visionary advantages that are promised,—we heed not the sordid calculations upon which they are based: we adhere to the right and the truth; and, deaf to the seductions and the craft of this new shape of infidelity, we cling to the Book wherein it is written, “My son, fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change.”